Withdrawal of tax exemption

*5. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the absence of any State-sponsored Social-Security for non-Government, non-Public Sector, Private Sector and self-employed persons, incentive of tax exemptions motivate people to save/invest in LIC, PPF, NSC etc., and obtain self-financed social-security;

(b) whether it is also a fact that withdrawal of tax exemptions will de-motivate people against savings in aforesaid schemes jeopardising above said self-acquired social security; and

(c) if the answer to (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative in what manner Government propose to address this sensitive issue?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH: (a) to (c) Sir, the issues raised by the Hon'ble Member relate to tax policy. At present, when the Budgetary exercise is in process, it will not be possible to respond to the Question.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Madam, why has this particular question been accepted when the reply says that it will not be possible to respond to this question? Why accept this kind of question? We can always have another question instead of this one.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I shall find out.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Since this question relates directly to the Budget proposals, it is not possible for me to respond to it. The Budget is next-door. It is an established convention in the House that questions relating to the Budget, tax-rates, hikes in rates and lowering of rates, which otherwise follow the discusion of the Budget, cannot possibly be discussed in the House before the Budget is presented... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: The point is well taken. But my question is, why accept such a question at all?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I shall find out from the Question Section, why the question was accepted..... (*Interruptions*).....

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Madam, a clarification is required from the Chair. If what the hon. Minister is saying is true, then that point has to be taken cognisance of and necessary amendments to the rules for accepting a question will have to be made. But so long as such an amendment is not there, some kind of a reply has to be there.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I shall find out from the Secretariat how this question was accepted if it is relating to the Budget, and when the Budget is going to be placed before the House, before the Parliament, such a questions should not have been accepted. I will make an enquiry and come back to the House and let you know.

(Q. No. 6-Hon. Member absent)

*6.[*The questioner (Shri Anil Sharma) was absent for answer vide pages* 26-27.]

Tourism policy for the hills

*7. SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foreign tourist traffic has come down during the last three years; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government have any hill tourism policy keeping in view the attraction of enchanting mountains in the country;

(c) if not, what action is contemplated to promote tourism, pilgrimage, adventure and environmental aspects on mountains;

(d) what are the plans to develop Hill Stations of India to attract more foreign tourists; and

(e) the details of financial assistance given to States during the last three years for the development of tourism?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN) (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) The Foreign tourist arrivals during the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 are 2.65 million, 2.54 million and 2.36 million respectively.